AN ANALYSIS OF MODELS OF EDUCATION OF M.Ed. PROGRAMME ADOPTED IN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF NORTHERN REGION OF INDIA

Synopsis

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1.1.0 INTRODUCTION

The invaluable fact pointed out by the Education Commission "The destiny of India is being shaped in her classroom'' (Kothari, 1964)has been furthered by adding that "the destiny of these classroom is being shaped in the institution of education with committed teachers"(Kumar, 2013). There is no denying the fact that the success of any school education system relies upon, if not entirely, but hugely on the quality of teaching they receive via the relentless pursuit of teachers (Ali & Rizvi, 2007). These teachers themselves are guided by teacher educators.

Herein, comes to play the importance of one of the programmes of teacher education- Master of Education (M.Ed.) which amongst other professionals, provides society with a vanguard of teacher educators. In layman's terms, Master of Education is about preparing "teachers of teachers" (Mishra & Chaudhary, 2018), and thus, the gravity of this programme can never be pressed enough through mere jugglery of words. Preparing one for a profession (teacher educator) who, in turn, hones the skills of one preparing to take up another profession (teachers) is an arduous task that requires action from multiple fronts and perspectives. In this light, the entire programme of Master of Education, right from its duration, curriculum to transaction of syllabus need the minutest sculpting for it generates the ones who are to shoulder the task to gift the society those who can be rightly called its 'torch bearers'.

Having said that, the programme of M.Ed. had long been critiqued by the researches led by national level organisations to individual researchers. By calling M.Ed. as just an "extension of B.Ed., lacking any serious inputs towards the preparation of teacher educators, primary or secondary", NCTE (2009) also put forward the opine of NCF Position Paper on National Focus Group on Teacher Education for Curriculum Renewal (2005) about M.Ed., along with other programmes of teacher education being "woefully inadequate in facilitating a deeper discourse in education"(NCTE, 2009). It had also been alleged to be of generic nature by NCERT in its document- Preparing Teacher Educators: M. Ed. Curriculum Review and Reconstruction (2013) along with having a dearth of time to impart the required knowledge and skills amongst its persuants (Pramanik & Gawarikar, 2015). Well aware of the importance of the programme of Master of Education, a two-year M.Ed. programme with adequate provision to branch out into specializations in curriculum studies, pedagogic studies, policy, finance, and foundational studies was recommended by Justice Verma Commission in 2012.

In the light of above, finally in 2014, NCTE called-in for two-years B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes along with other reforms(*20th Annual Report 2014-15*, 2015). Being the statutory body of Teacher Education, it also specified the norms and standards for various programmes of teacher education; appendix-5 pertaining to Master of Education(*National Council for Teacher Education: Notification*, 2014). The teacher education institutes are to hold onto this document as an anchor for ensuring a 'glocal India'.

Expertise of teacher educators has not enjoyed the same amount of attention in recent years as that of expertise of teachers (K. Smith, 2005). Similarly, though a lot of research has been conducted on two-year B.Ed. programme and its various aspects, a few have been taken up regarding two-year M.Ed. programme with one of the recent studies calling the curricula followed by the university of Mysore as yet again, "stale" (RIE Mysore, 2018). Also, although a few in comparison, it is always advised that to truly ascertain the impact and/or pertinence of any new act, policy, or even curriculum, one needs to let it unfurl for at least a period of four to five years. Now that it has been six years since the introduction of two-year B.Ed. & M.Ed. programmes, five batches have successfully completed the given programmes, it will be now appropriate to find out whether the present two-year M.Ed. curriculum is meeting the needs of its beneficiaries.

Further, it is a known fact that how best a curriculum may be, its success majorly depends upon how it is transacted(Mukhopadhyay, 2014). This aspect of 'transaction' requires all the more attention at the Master's level given the hard check that at its receiving end are those who have to guide the pre-service teachers to educate an entire ocean of creative minds through innovative, engaging, and effective ways. Hence, while scrutinising the curriculum of two years M.Ed. programme, it is imperative to examine "existing pedagogies and instructional approaches" ("Student Assessment and Curriculum Evaluation," 2013) in order to throw light on the most productive ones and give up on the obsoletes.

One of the aims of M.Ed. programme requires the scholars to emerge as active researchers in the field of education (*National Council for Teacher Education: Notification*, 2014). This is primarily achieved via the component of dissertation in the curriculum. Dissertation as they call it- "academic work" of scholars, "demonstrate an individual's ability to undertake scholarship in a field" (Pandya, 2015). In contrast to traditional way (pen and paper) of performing in other papers/ courses, this requires practical application of the aspect of 'Research Methodology' amongst other aspects of the programme, observes

Pandya (2015). This stresses on the need of efficient and supportive supervisors all the more for novice researchers, who not only help the researchers to select a suitable and manageable research topic 'mutually', hold expertise in the field in which the researchers wish to work or are game "to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as a supervisor". Also, is a pre-requisite that the practice of allotment of researchers to the guide is well- planned and transparent.

For a sound education system at national level requires teacher education to be "an enterprise that is grounded in research, revolves around continuous assessment of learning, and makes decisions driven by evidence…"(M. C. Smith, 2003). Due importance should be given to assessing the pre-service educators, not only to find out whether Learning Objectives of the programme are being achieved or not, but also to keep the quality of the programme in check, and to monitor how qualified teacher educators the programme is able to deliver to the education community and society as a whole. This requires assessment which not just simply "selects and rejects people" (Shamatov, 1998), but provides a deeper insight of the candidate. Hence, what is required is "assessment of assessment"(M. C. Smith, 2003) at M.Ed. level while keeping in mind "Do our assessment practices align well with what we would like our students to do?" (Stigging, 1999)

The world has been a witness to the halt posed by Covid-19. The arena of education is yet another one that underwent the virus lockdown (Jena, 2020). Due to this, it has become quite evident that amongst other nations, at least India was not prepared to deal with any such unusual times. Though a lot of educational institutions had put a comma in their functioning and were struggling hard to get a grip on the situation, a chosen few were running efficiently, helping the students to not experience any kind of break- major or minor. The credit for this goes somehow hugely to their adeptness in dealing with technology apart from having a well experienced academic and administrative task force that has kept the flow of new admission, lectures, assignments, assessments, etc. alive.

This requires, amongst others, the availability of resource centres along with other infrastructure facilities as well as their full utilization by the work force of the educational institutions. As a part of The Information Age, the educational institutions are "to include these aspects at the heart of their learning" (Adelabu et al., 2014)and that is why NCTE recommended having a library, resource centre, appropriate and functional labs amongst other amenities for the candidates and faculty of Master of

Education (*National Council for Teacher Education: Notification*, 2014). Government initiative in the form of National Knowledge Commission and National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology were introduced in the country more than a decade ago, and these functioning amenities are required by the educational force more than ever, but the heart-breaking question is- Do we even enjoy the availability of such resources?

The contemporary times expect to cherish "versatile personality" of students shaped up by "skilled teachers" (Manivannan & Premila, 2009). Consequently, as part of the expected competencies, we have seven soft skills for novice teachers provided explicitly by Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia in 2006, namely- communication, critical and problem solving, team work, life-long learning and management of information, entrepreneurship, ethics, moral and professional, and leadership (Ngang, Yunus, et al., 2015). This further obliges the amalgamation of soft skills with hard ones at M.Ed. level in order to relish the services of "highly intellectual and skillful" (Pachauri&Yadav, 2014)professionals produced through the programme. The technical skills and knowledge acquired by the scholars of Master of Education through the various aspects of the programme discussed above shall help one in securing, keeping and advancing in a job. But, these hard skills when complemented with soft skills shape their personality and equip them well at their work place which ultimately helps them in "85 percent of job success." (Ngang, Hashim, et al., 2015)

Needless to say, policies of the Indian education system have been screaming of having such programmes that generate employability. Moreover, entering tertiary education by most aspirants is in a hope to secure better employment opportunities (Sing, 2010). Having stated that, a person who takes up M.Ed. after investing at least four years of studying (5 or 7 years in other cases) would be dejected not being able to get employed, to say, the least. Employment requires overlapping of candidate's abilities with that of the needs of targeted organisation which on a broader context needs us (Sing, 2010), as pointed out through another research, "to focus on both internal and external efficiency" (Ngang, Hashim, et al., 2015) of employment generating programmes in order to address market's supply and demand. Further, in order to sustain in the market's cut throat competition, a prospective teacher educator thrives on appropriate enriching experiences gained during the programme through knowledge

and practice of writing and presenting research papers; contributing in organizing seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.; participating actively in college activities and functioning; etc.

Finally, it can be said that different models of education followed in different teacher education institutions are bound to have their own pros and cons. Conducting an in-depth study of some of these models through this research will equip the researcher to “study naturally occurring variations"(M. C. Smith, 2003)and thereby, suggesting some measures to capitalize on these as per a surfacing trend in TE assessment. The evidence produced thus, shall direct program design decisions in teacher education while having “implications for larger policy and practice issues.” (M. C. Smith, 2003)

1.2.0 EMERGENCE OF THE TOPIC

The topic emerged primarily out of personal experiences of the researcher i.e. conversations with teacher educators about two-year M.Ed. programme; coming across the needs of additional elements in curricula of universities so as to meet the norms specified by NCTE; observation of repetition and overlapping of curriculum content with that of two-year B.Ed. programme; limitation of the programme to deal with unusual situations; experiencing predominantly just a single way of curriculum transaction across all papers; availability but no access to resource centres accounting for a limited experience of prospective teacher educators and thereby, posing as a shortcoming on their work front; various researches on ill-equipped resource centres and their utilization; tremendous expectation from teacher educators on the job front as opposed to limited experiences they get during the programme resulting in either unemployment, poor employment or job non-satisfaction (Travers & Cooper, 1993), etc.

If this is going to be the case of the mental health of teacher educators, one might shudder to imagine the fate of school students who would be taught by teachers shaped up by these teacher educators. One of the consequences would be giving rise to an unhappy army of school teachers who would be expected to practice the ‘Happiness Curriculum’ in their classrooms. What an irony! This may be the case if these teacher educators continue to serve, but what if they opt-out? Can we afford the wastage it may cause and/or is causing to the nation’s resources? Thus, it may be said that this status-quo research shall be an eye-opener not only for the stakeholders, but also for our policymakers who may look at the ground reality intricately and take necessary steps to improve the situation, and thereby, provide a firmer backbone to the education system of the country.

1.3.0 NEED AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

National Council for Teacher Education is the anchor that provides a firm backbone to teacher education in India and thereby, keeps its quality in check. It ensures that a general uniformity is maintained throughout the nation when it comes to various programmes of teacher education. But, one of the challenges faced by TE programmes is the gap between espoused norms and standards of NCTE and grim reality of TEI on ground. For example, the statutory body advocates having in place the aspect of 'Internship and Attachment' as a part of M.Ed. curriculum (*National Council for Teacher Education: Notification*, 2014). Though one of the most important aspects, this facility is not provided by one of the leading institutions of India to its M.Ed. scholars. We also have a study pointing out towards no coordination between curriculum and syllabi development bodies of teacher education, namely UGC, NCTE and RCI (RIE Mysore, 2018).

As another subject of mockery, we have pre-service teachers being preached against the 'One-size-fits-all' notion by those (teacher educators) who practice this very idea in and out. This can be probably because the teacher educators are themselves a product of the same practice. The transaction of curricula at teacher education institutes has incessantly been criticised for exploiting "lecture method" (Mukhopadhyay, 2014), following traditional methods of teaching (RIE Mysore, 2018) and teacher educators being unaware or having misconceptions about innovative teaching (Khandagale, 2016).

It has been observed that the quality of research "can contribute significantly in the realization of quality education" (Rohilla, 2020). This emphasizes the importance of authentic research all the more. Also, Mhunpiew (2013) compares the relationship of supervisor and his/her researcher with that of a couple entwined in marriage. But the aspect of dissertation during the M.Ed. programme witnesses not-so healthy practices right from allotment of supervisor to research scholars, selecting a topic of choice of the scholar and/or relevance to the society, observing ethical ways of conducting the research, supervising the scholars' work constantly, etc.

Adding to the woes, it has been pointed out by Mishra & Chaudhary (2018) that "teacher education reform lags a decade behind school education reform". We want the teachers to assess the students through varying ways in order to assess different abilities of the students, but these teachers and their educators are still expected to gain degrees by showcasing predominantly their cramming ability as the

assessment structure of TE programmes are still dominated by pen and paper tests. (RIE Mysore, 2018) Being awarded the stature of a professional course, it has become the need of the hour that we welcome "a shift from de-contextualised tests to more authentic assessments" which requires having in play "assessments that observe student teachers' performance in situations that resemble the current and future teaching practice as much as possible" (Gulikers et al., 2008).

What can be more shameful than the pre-service teacher educators of 21st century still being taught the paper of Educational Technology merely through lecture method and as a result, with no surprises, being assessed on it by pen and paper tests? Walmiki & Ramakrishnegowda (2009) pointed out towards lack of sufficient hardware and software facilities, and no "adequate internet nodes and bandwidth" in most of the libraries. Time and again researches have recommended strengthening of ICT integration amongst teacher educators of India but the question is 'how?'. When there are either no labs, or no access, or non- functional infrastructure in the labs, how can we look forward for integration?

Researches have pointed out towards significant difference between the "gained and needed level of soft skill components" (Ngang, Hashim, et al., 2015). This was one of the reasons that diversified and innovative programmes were proposed to be given special support as per the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012) as 'Relevance to Society' was identified as one of the priority concerns by UGC. This witnessed the recommendation of university curricula "be reformed to incorporate foundation skills and advance skills in learner"(Prajapati, 2018). On parallel lines, we had the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India giving a new mantra of 'Skill, Reskill and Upskill' in the year 2020, and Dayalbagh Educational Institute, a deemed university has been recognised as living up to this mantra. Understanding the vital importance of skills and to make the country- the Skill Capital of the world, the government also invited creative ideas and suggestions from the youth. Now, though various webinars and training programs are organised based on different soft skills for school teachers, there are hardly any for teacher educators.

This greatly affects the employability prospect of teacher educators along with the lack of 'relevant' experiences during the M.Ed. programme in terms of no exposure to how to 'properly' conduct a research, write a research paper, present any in seminars and conferences, use basic research software programmes, face a real-life interview, get a head start in the 'education market', and so on. This not only leads to sheer wastage of resources of the society, but also the invaluable time of the scholar. Lack

of such experiences, if not directly non-employability, becomes responsible non- job satisfaction and no advancement in career of the candidate. Thus, this calls for the interplay of education and employability to be respected as per the demand of contemporary times (Pramanik & Gawarikar, 2015).

The basis of fine teacher education programs is "coherent conceptual frameworks, guided by current theory and research, and infused with the wisdom of practice" (M. C. Smith, 2003). Keeping this point in centre focus, the researcher by studying various models of education practised in various TEIs aims to come up with a unique mixed model of TE that finds its roots in the best practices followed at the sample institutions.

1.4.0 TITLE OF THE STUDY

An Analysis of Models of Education of M.Ed. Programme Adopted in Teacher Education Institutions of Northern Region of India

1.5.0 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1.5.1 Models of Education: The approaches and beliefs about learning, instruction, and content resting on the philosophical foundation of an institution (Bussinger, 2018)

1.5.2 M.Ed. Programme: The post graduate professional degree of Master of Education

1.5.3 Teacher Education Institutions: In this study, the term pertains to educational institutions offering courses and programmes of Teacher Education, specifically Master of Education

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The study shall deal with the following research questions:

1. How relevant is the current model of education of M.Ed. programme for prospective teacher educators?
2. To what extent is it aligned with the structure provided by the statutory agency NCTE?
3. Which are the most prevalent curriculum transaction procedures undertaken by teacher educators to transact the curriculum?
4. Which other transaction procedures can be undertaken to make them conducive to unprecedented times?
5. What are the various forms of assessment for pre-service teacher educators?
6. Which resource centres are available for the professional growth of prospective teacher educators?

7. How well are these resource centres utilized by prospective teacher educators?
8. Which soft skills are promoted amongst the pre-service teacher educators during the M.Ed. programme?
9. Which soft skills remain neglected amongst the pre-service teacher educators during the M.Ed. programme?
10. Which activities/experiences in particular, apart from formal teaching-learning processes, are provided to prospective teacher educators to enhance their employability?
11. Which model of education amongst these universities serves the needs of times the best?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The research objectives of the given study are to:

1. undertake SWOC analysis of current model of education adopted for M.Ed. programme in teacher education institutions
2. determine whether the curricula of the sample universities are aligned with the norms prescribed by the regulatory body of Teacher Education
3. study the transaction procedures of two-year M.Ed. curriculum in terms of planning, teaching methods employed, use of media, and co-curricular activities.
4. determine the prevalent forms of assessment undertaken by pre-service teacher educators
5. study the availability and utilization of various resource centres for professional growth of prospective teacher educators.
6. identify which of the 7 soft skill/skills need(s) to be stressed upon amongst the pre-service teacher educators
7. explore the employability prospect of prospective teacher educators with respect to M.Ed. programme
8. explore the measures for improvement of transaction procedures, and increase in employability prospect of prospective teacher educators
9. suggest a model of education based on the best practices implemented by the educational models being studied

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology:

Since the study aims to find out the efficiencies and deficiencies of current models of education adopted for M.Ed. programme, it is evaluative in nature and shall employ the mixed method of research.

Sampling Procedure:

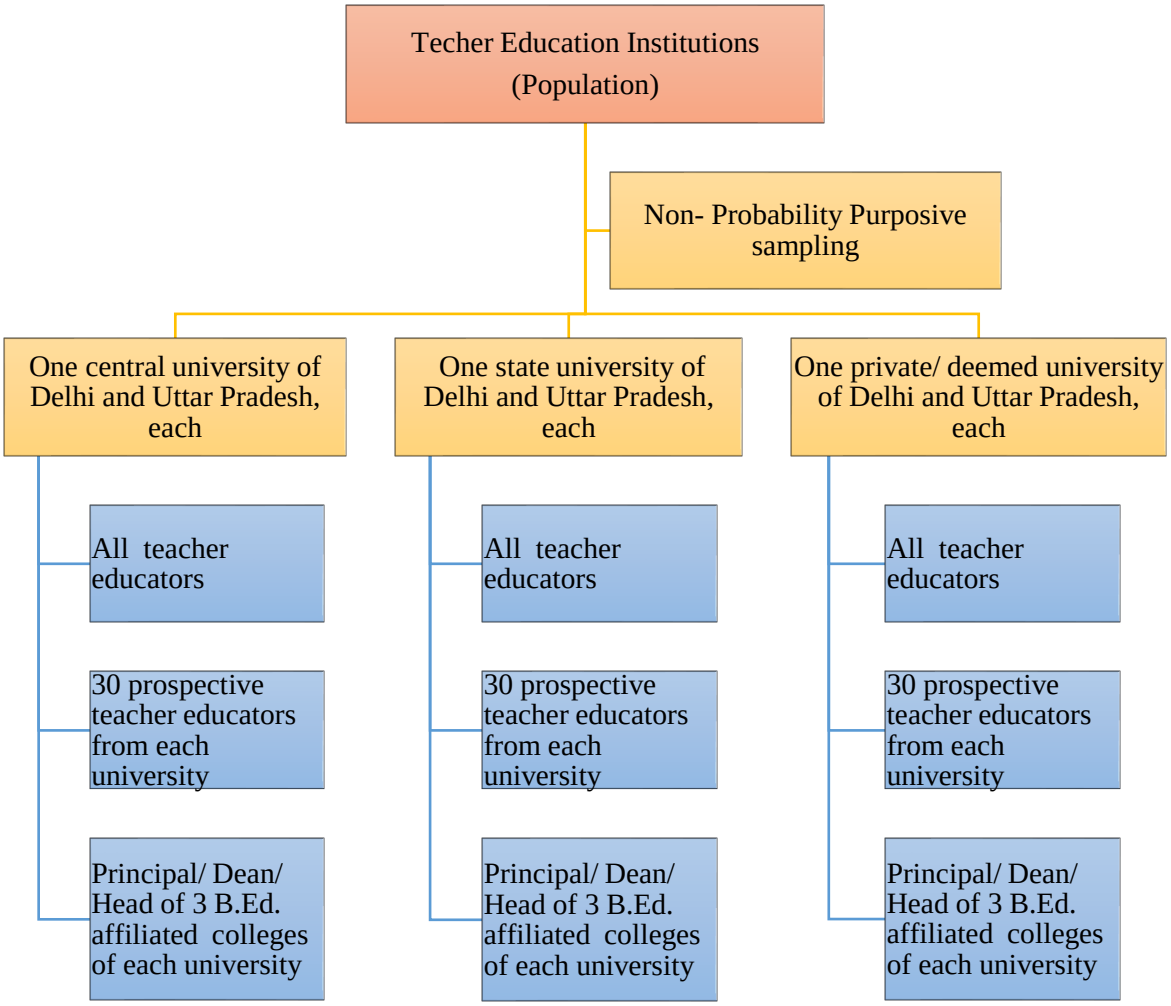
Techer Education Institutions (Population)
Non- Probability Purposive sampling
One central university of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, each
One state university of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, each
One private/ deemed university of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, each
All teacher educators
30 prospective teacher educators from each university
Principal/ Dean/ Head of 3 B.Ed. affiliated colleges of each university
All teacher educators
30 prospective teacher educators from each university
Principal/ Dean/ Head of 3 B.Ed. affiliated colleges of each university
All teacher educators
30 prospective teacher educators from each university
Principal/ Dean/ Head of 3 B.Ed. affiliated colleges of each university

Figure 1. Sampling Procedure

Sampling Technique:

In order to have better control over data, Non- Probability Purposive sampling would be employed by the researcher.

Sample:

- All the teacher educators of the above-mentioned universities
- 180 prospective teacher educators of the above-mentioned universities
- Principal/Dean/Head of 18 B.Ed. colleges affiliated to the above-mentioned universities

Tools and Techniques:

The researcher shall be employing self-developed tools and techniques after establishing their reliability and validity:

Table 1- Tools and Techniques

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO BE APPLIED
1. to undertake SWOC analysis of current model of education adopted for M.Ed. programme in teacher education institutions	SWOC Matrix shall be prepared for: (i) teacher educators (ii) prospective teacher educators (iii) principals/deans/heads of B.Ed. colleges
2. To determine whether the curricula of the sample universities are aligned with the norms prescribed by the regulatory body of Teacher Education	Checklist shall be prepared for each university
3. To study the transaction procedures of two-year M.Ed. curriculum in terms of planning, teaching methods employed, use of media, organisation of co-curricular activities	(i) Curriculum transaction questionnaires for teacher educators and prospective teacher educators (ii) Observation schedule for teacher educators
4. To determine the prevalent forms of assessment undertaken by pre-service teacher educators	Structured interview schedule shall be developed for Principal/Dean/Head of M.Ed. programme
5. To study the availability and utilization of various resource centres for professional growth of prospective teacher educators 6. To identify which of the 7 soft skill/skills need(s) to be pressed upon amongst the pre-service teacher educators	Questionnaires shall be developed for: (i) pre-service teacher educators (ii) in-service teacher educators
7. To explore the employability prospect of prospective teacher educators with respect to M.Ed. programme	(i) Focus Group Discussion shall be conducted with pre-service teacher educators (ii) Interviews shall be conducted with the principals/deans/heads of B.Ed. colleges
8. To explore the measures for improvement of curriculum, transaction procedures, and increase in employability prospect of prospective teacher educators	Based on above findings
9. To suggest a model of education based on the best practices implemented by the educational models being studied	Based on above findings

Analysis:

The collected data shall be analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively by keeping into consideration the nature of data in hand and objectives of the investigation.

The quantitative data would be analysed using frequency & percentage analysis.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Keeping in mind the time constraints and to have better control over data:

- Only universities in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh shall be taken up for the study
- Only two state, two central, and two private/ deemed or one private and one deemed universities under MoE running two-year M.Ed. programme shall be taken up for the study
- Only 180 prospective teacher educators shall be included in the study
- Only 18 principals/deans/head of B.Ed. colleges shall be included in the study

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